GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2026
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2004
REVIEW OF PDS
Mahato Shri Sunil Kumar;Prasad Shri Hari Kewal

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted a mid-term review of the Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the outcome of the same;

(c) whether the target fixed for the plan period has been achieved;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the remedial measures taken by the Government in this regard; and

(f) the outcome of the same?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a), (b), (c) & (d): Yes, Sir. With a view to strengthen the Public Distribution System (PDS) particularly in the poorest and the backward blocks of the country, the functioning of the PDS has been reviewed in the Conference of the State Food Secretaries held on 17th September, 2004 and thereafter in the Conference of State Food Ministers held on 28th October, 2004. As per the recommendations of these Conferences all the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have been instructed to ensure that all families at the risk of hunger including migrant labour/displaced persons/homeless population are issued ration entitlement authority slips; to improve the economic viability of ration shops and to increase procurement under decentralized procurement of foodgrains so as to make the PDS more cost effective as well as to cater to the local tastes. As a measure to strengthen the PDS, the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have been advised that cooperatives of Women and Ex-servicemen should be given priority in the matter of allotting fair price shops licences.

(e) & (f): The following measures have been taken to making it more accessible to the poor and the vulnerable:-

(i) The State Governments and the Union Territory Administrations have been asked to actively involve the Panchayati Raj Institutions to monitor the functioning of the Fair Price Shops, as a measure of social audit;

(ii) The States and Union Territories have also been asked to constitute Vigilance Committees on the PDS at the State, District, Block and FPS levels;

(iii) With a view to efficiently reaching PDS commodities to the consumers in a transparent manner, a model Citizens` Charter has been issued by the Central Government for adoption by the State Governments/UT Administrations;

(iv) In order to strengthen the hands of the State Governments, the Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 has been issued on 31st August, 2001 under section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 with a view to curb willful adulteration, substitution, diversion etc. of the PDS commodities. An offence committed in violation of the provisions of the Order shall invoke criminal liability under the EC Act.

(v) A Task Force has been constituted to look into irregularities in the implementation of the TPDS and the Antyodaya Anna Yojana in the identified areas. The shortcomings/irregularities noticed by the Task Force Teams are forwarded to the concerned State Governments and Union Territory Administrations for corrective action.